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Agenda item 20 (b)
STRENGTHENING OF THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE OF THE UNITED NATIONS, INCLUDING SPECIAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE: SPECIAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES OR REGIONS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-fifth year

Letter dated 10 March 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to bring to your attention the statement on humanitarian aid in southern Sudan issued on 8 March 2000 by the Presidency of the European Union on behalf of the Union (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Antonio MONTEIRO
Permanent Representative of Portugal
to the United Nations

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Annex

[Original: English and French]

Statement on humanitarian aid in southern Sudan issued on 8 March 2000 by the Presidency of the European Union on behalf of the European Union

The European Union expresses its grave concern at the conditions imposed by the Sudanese People's Liberation Movement/Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (SPLM/SRRA) on non-governmental organizations working in southern Sudan, which have led to the withdrawal of many of those organizations.

The European Union, one of the largest donors of humanitarian aid to the areas controlled by SPLM/SRRA, is particularly worried by the consequences of this situation, which will threaten the lives of thousands of people already in danger because of the civil war in the country. It is also concerned at the greater risks for the safety and equipment of humanitarian staff.

The European Union urges SPLM/SRRA to resume negotiations with the non-governmental organizations as soon as possible with the objective of creating conditions that will allow all such organizations to carry out humanitarian operations unhindered and in accordance with international humanitarian law.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, the associated countries Cyprus, Malta and Turkey and the European Free Trade Association countries members of the European Economic Area align themselves with the present statement.